

**Secondary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on**

Bromley Schools Collegiate

**Coopers College
Hawkwood Lane
Chislehurst
Kent
BR7 5PS**

**A short inspection
2005/06**

**Managing Inspector:
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Introduction

The Bromley Schools Collegiate works in partnership with eight schools providing secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses for the 11-18 age range. It offers training in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), history, geography, modern foreign languages and religious education. At the time of the inspection there were 29 trainees.

Context

The inspection was carried out by a team of inspectors in accordance with the *Ofsted Handbook for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (2005-2011)*.

This report draws on evidence from a short inspection of the provision and an inspection of the management and quality assurance arrangements.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Main inspection judgements

Management and quality assurance: **Grade 2**

The overall quality of training is at least good.

The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- the coherence of the training programme
- the focus on tailoring trainees' programmes to their individual needs
- the strong emphasis on developing reflective practice and independent study skills
- the efficiency with which the selection process is administered and the very good communications with prospective and successful applicants to the course
- the recruitment of well qualified trainees who are highly suited to teaching
- the very high level of involvement of school partners in all aspects of the course
- the collaborative approach to the management of the collegiate.

Points for action

- providing an overview for each subject course that shows the essential core of subject content, themes and issues that trainees need to know, and how these will be addressed through the different elements of the training.

Points for consideration

- improving the quality of subject improvement planning
- improving the quality of overall self-evaluation and improvement planning
- making better use of the information gathered through selection
- improving the quality of school-based subject training.

The quality of training

1. The course is designed to meet the Requirements and to enable trainees to meet the Standards. The course is well structured so that there is coherence between the central general professional studies programme and mentor sessions in schools. The general professional studies programme makes good use of expertise from within the partnership, as well as of visiting speakers, to provide good quality training, for example, on lesson planning. Trainees spend at least a day in a primary school, but for some trainees this is insufficient to provide insights into the issues of continuity and progression that the primary experience is intended to address. For this reason a second primary placement is being added to the course structure.

2. The course structure is designed to provide trainees with programmes that are tailored to their individual needs and this generally works well. In schools trainees have good opportunities to observe a wide range of teaching styles, have good experiences to support their professional development and begin to take responsibility for teaching as soon as they are ready. Care is taken in the placement of trainees so that, for example in modern foreign languages, the second placement complements the first well, and is based on areas for development identified by the mentors.

3. The model of training requires school-based subject mentors to provide the bulk of the subject-specific training. Although this is often very good there is some variation in the quality of this training. Such variations are in part addressed by the limited amount of subject pedagogy training which takes place in the spring term. There is no explicit overview of the subject courses to show the essential core of subject content, themes and issues that trainees need to know about. As a consequence individual programmes do not always address the full range that could be expected in the course.

4. The training provided by mentors is based on three main elements: the generic theme set by the course calendar and related to work in professional studies; the continuing programme of evaluation and planning for teaching; and work on identified deficiencies in pedagogic subject knowledge. The first two of these predominate in training sessions and in allocated study time to the detriment of time spent on subject issues. The responsibility for identifying and remedying deficiencies in subject knowledge and how to teach it largely rests with trainees in consultation with their mentors. This is sometimes done well, but there is variation across subjects in the effectiveness of this aspect of training.

5. The trainees are required to undertake a range of informal tasks in schools, as well as formal presentations and assignments, which make a useful contribution to the training. Most mentors support the trainees well in preparing for this work. Mentors also give good guidance to trainees on the use of the subject-specific

supported self-study time that is a key feature of the training. Senior school mentors, whose role is to oversee all training in the school, provide useful additional training, such as in class management.

6. Subject mentors know their trainees well and provide them with experiences that move them forward as and when they are ready. They make effective use of course documents, including the weekly observation sheets and mentor meeting agendas that ensure continuity across the course. There is a strong emphasis on developing reflective practice and independent study skills. Mentors are very effective in getting trainees to reflect on their progress, and excellent examples were seen in English, science and modern foreign languages. These self reviews also support forward planning and target setting. Targets are usually challenging, precise, and matched well to an identified need, but there is some variation in their quality.

7. Trainees have the resources they need. However, they are given insufficient guidance as to priorities in addressing the reading list. The collegiate library provides an additional resource for trainees, but some are unaware of it and others find key texts hard to obtain. The collegiate has worked hard to develop an e-learning environment. This is proving very effective in terms of systems and procedural communication, but is at an early stage in terms of its potential for subject training and as a medium for professional discourse. Some subjects, such as science, have made more progress than others.

8. The assessment procedures are clear. Formal assignments, four classroom assessments, the Standards record, the portfolio and the interim report provide a good range of evidence against which a final assessment judgement is made. The collegiate has been working to provide subject-specific exemplification to support assessment against the Standards, but this is not yet complete or consistent across subjects. In some subjects, for example in English, there are very good assessment exemplar assessment materials to support trainees and mentors. The collegiate's arrangements ensure the rigorous and accurate assessment of the trainees.

Management and quality assurance

9. The selection procedures ensure that well qualified trainees are recruited to the course, many of whom subsequently take up employment within collegiate schools. Prospective applicants are very well informed about the training programme through recruitment and taster days, visits to collegiate schools and a recently revised web site. The collegiate office is well run and initial enquiries are handled promptly and efficiently, with good consideration given from the outset to the individual needs and circumstances of prospective applicants. This signals the collegiate's concern for trainees' well-being and is a factor in its success in attracting trainees from under-represented groups, including those from minority ethnic communities.

10. Schools are actively involved in the selection of trainees; headteachers and mentors are present at all interviews. Interviews are rigorous in identifying applicants' eligibility and qualities, but the outcomes are not used to provide trainees with a detailed assessment of their strengths and weaknesses to aid their preparation for the training, or to provide mentors with information to help plan the individual training programmes. Since the last inspection, the collegiate has improved the quality of subject-specific pre-course tasks. In some subjects, such as science, these tasks provide an excellent start to the training; but their nature and purpose vary greatly between subjects; some are far less demanding and purposeful than others.

11. The very high level of collaboration between partnership schools ensures the generally good quality of the training across the collegiate. Created in response to teacher shortages, the training programme is now firmly embedded within the eight participating schools and viewed by headteachers as contributing to both teacher training and school improvement. The frequency of communication between those involved in the training is a strong feature of the partnership and the new web site is strengthening this. The senior mentors, who oversee the management of the training in each school, meet regularly with the ITT co-ordinator. This group has a crucial role in planning the training programme and formulating policy for consideration by the collegiate board, comprising the headteachers of the eight partner schools. It discharges this responsibility very effectively.

12. The partnership agreement is succinct, clear and well understood by schools. It makes clear the conditions under which any of the schools could be deselected. Many of the trainers have considerable experience of teacher education. They are strongly supportive of the collegiate and highly committed to the training. School senior mentors monitor the training programmes closely through regular contact with subject mentors and trainees and, invariably, prompt action is taken to resolve any difficulties or quality concerns. Lead subject mentors are meant to co-ordinate and assure the quality of subject training across the schools, although there is variation in their effectiveness across subjects. These procedures are not fully effective in identifying and dealing with the variations in the quality of subject mentoring.

13. The collegiate pays good attention to the training and development of mentors. Training is well attended. Mentors have access to training even when they do not have a trainee and this ensures that their expertise is regularly refreshed and updated. New mentors receive very good support and guidance from the senior mentor in their school and, in some cases, from the lead subject mentor. Particularly good consideration is given to succession planning with inexperienced mentors having the opportunity to shadow more experienced colleagues. Despite this training, there are still variations in the quality of mentoring across the partnership.

14. The assessment process is effectively moderated. Joint observation by mentors and senior tutors is used at different assessment points to moderate judgements, and senior tutors visit each other's schools to conduct an internal moderation of final

assessments. Helpful documentation supports the accuracy and consistency of judgements of the Standards across the collegiate and regular meetings of mentors are used well to compare judgements and track the progress of individual trainees. External examiners fulfil their responsibilities for moderating judgements and also provide useful general advice to the collegiate.

15. Although the provider reacts promptly to feedback from mentors, trainees' evaluations and external examiners, it lacks a systematic approach to self-evaluation. It does not identify clearly the different evaluation activities, their timing and those responsible. Nor does it make clear its future priorities for improvement in relation to the training, management and quality assurance of the course. Furthermore, there are no subject-based reviews or subject development plans to inform the provider's overall improvement planning. The collegiate works closely with another provider of school-based initial teacher training. It has not yet formally analysed its strengths and shortcomings in relation to a wider range of school-based providers.